

CONAN THE  
BARBARIAN

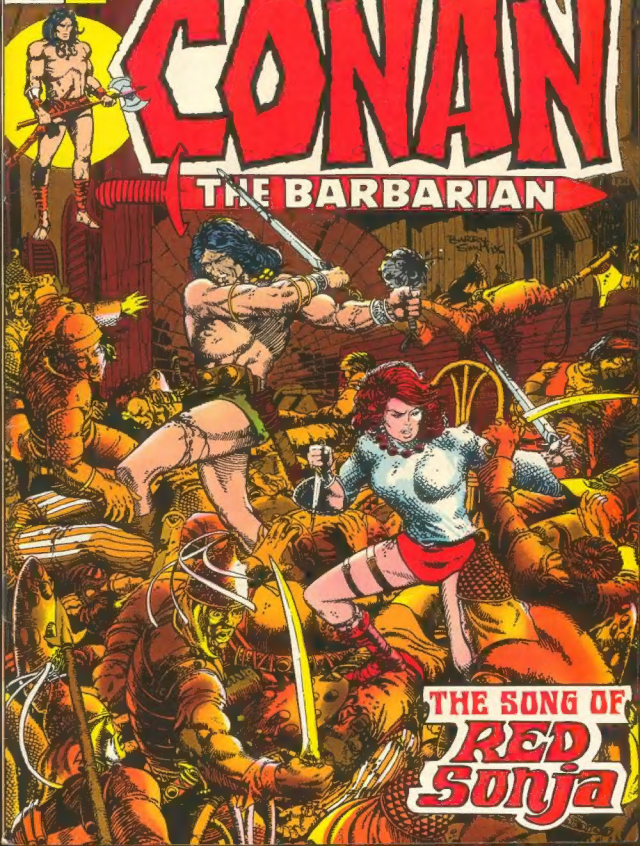
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
AUTHORITY

20¢ 24  
MAR  
02498

# CONAN

THE BARBARIAN



THE SONG OF  
**RED  
SONJA**

Stan Lee  
PRESENTS:

# CONAN THE BARBARIAN

All the world's a  
gore-rimmed sea,  
Lo, the devil laughs  
with glee.  
Come and dance then,  
you with me--  
Come and caper  
wild and free!  
With red blood  
those fires are lit;  
Hades' smoke is  
tinged with it!  
--R.E.H.

## The Song of RED SONJA

MARKALET! A CITY SURROUNDED BY HOSTILE  
SWORDS OUT OF DISTANT TURAN.

BUT, IN THAT SECTOR OF  
THE CITY WHERE THE  
TAVERNS ARE THICKEST,  
THE SHOUTS THIS NIGHT  
ARE NOT OF WAR...

SON-YA!  
SON-YA!  
SON-YA!!



**ROY THOMAS**  
WRITER/EDITOR

**BARRY SMITH**  
ARTIST

**ARTIESIMEK, LETTERER**  
**BARRY SMITH, COLORIST**

UTILIZING CHARACTERS CREATED  
AND POEMS WRITTEN BY  
**ROBERT E. HOWARD**

CONAN THE BARBARIAN is published by MAGAZINE MANAGEMENT CO., INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 575 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022. Published monthly. Copyright ©1972 by Magazine Management Co., Inc. Marvel Comics Group, all rights reserved 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Vol. 1, No. 24, March, 1973 issue. Price 20¢ per copy. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Printed in the U.S.A. by World Color Press, Inc., Sparta, Illinois 62286. Subscription rate \$2.75 for 12 issues. Canada \$3.25. Foreign \$4.50.

**ENGULFED IN A WHIRLING, MIRTH-LESS TRANCE, THE WARRIOR-MAIDEN SCARCELY HEARS THE LOUD HUZZAHS...**



**BUT THEY'RE NOT WITHOUT EFFECT...**



**...ON ONE OF THE AUDIENCE.**







CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE



**AND, FIGHT THEY DO--**



**--WITH EVERY MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL--**



**--FORGETTING FOR THE MOMENT THE TURANIAN WOLVES HOWLING HUNGRY AT THE GATE!**



**LET'S SEE IF YOUR BACKSIDE'S AS HARD!**

**YOUR SKULL IS THICK AS AN IRON PLATE, OAF.**

**CONAN-- BEHIND YOU--!!**



**MY THANKS FOR THAT, RED SON-YA!**

**I THOUGHT THIS WAS JUST A FRIENDLY BRAWL.**

**BUT, IF IT'S BLADES--THEN IT'S BLADES!**



**HEY, WOMAN--DO YOU PLAN TO MAKE THIS YOUR LIFEWORSHIP?**

**LET'S GO--BEFORE THE GUARDS COME TO HAUL US AWAY WITH THESE VERMIN!**

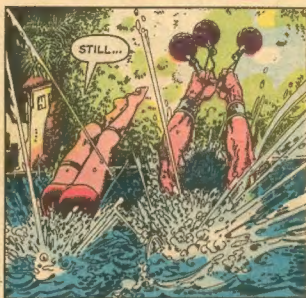
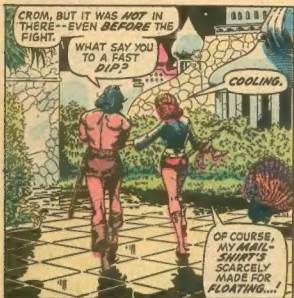
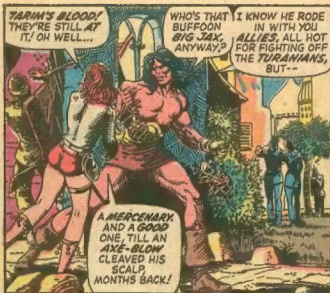
**WELL PUT, BARBARIAN...**



**JUST GIVE ME A SECOND TO RETRIEVE BOOTS...AND MY SWORD.**

**DONE! FOR, NOW THAT I THINK ON IT...**

**...THERE'S A THING OR TWO I'D BE WANTING, AS WELL!**







WELL?

WHAT ARE  
YOU  
STARING  
AT?



OH...  
NOW  
I  
SEE.



WE'VE NO TIME FOR THAT,  
YOU BIG BARBARIAN OAF!

NO?



No!!

MAYBE  
LATER--  
BUT THESE  
WATERS HAVE  
SOBERED  
ME UP--

--AND I RECALL I'VE  
THINGS TO DO TONIGHT--  
THINGS FOR WHICH I  
COULD USE *YOUR*  
HELP.

HUH?

A WENCH  
LIKE YOU  
COULD DRIVE  
THE DEVIL  
HIMSELF  
TO DRINK!  
I--

CROM,  
WOMAN--

CLOSE THAT  
SCOWLING  
MOUTH,  
MAN--AND  
LISTEN!  
HORSES!



AH! IT SEEMS YOU  
WERE RIGHT ABOUT  
*SOMETHING*,  
ANYWAY.

THE NIGHT  
WATCH  
COMES--TO  
HAUL THAT  
MOTLEY  
LOT AWAY.

IF THEY MAKE  
A MOVE *THIS*  
WAY, I'LL CLEAVE  
THEIR POPPISH  
HEADS FOR THEM.



CONAN...I  
SPOKE THE  
TRUTH  
WHEN I  
SAID THERE  
ARE DEEDS  
TO DO  
BEFORE  
THE DAWN.

BUT,  
WE'LL  
NEED  
HORSES...

THEN  
WE'LL  
GET  
THEM.



MAY TARIM AND  
ERLIK WRESTLE FOR  
MY SOUL--WHAT  
HAPPENED HERE,  
INNKEEPER?

YOU COULD LOSE BOTH:  
LICENSE AND HEAD FOR  
INCAPACITATING SO MANY  
MUCH-NEEDED SOLDIERS.

PLEASE,  
CHUMSALLA BEY...  
IT WAS NOT MY  
FAULT. I SWEAR  
BY THE KING'S  
OWN BEARD--!

SAVE IT!  
WHOSE  
FAULT  
WAS IT,  
THEN?



IT--IT  
WAS--

HIS!

BIG JAX?  
HE'S NOT  
GOT BRAINS  
ENOUGH  
TO--

WAIT!  
MY HORSE--  
NEIGHING--!



YOU SEE,  
GIRL?  
THE GODS  
WILL  
PROVIDE.

BY CROM, IT'S  
ENOUGH TO  
DRIVE A MAN  
TO TEMPLE.  
ALMOST.

STOP  
THIEF!!

CONAN!  
THE  
GUARD-  
CAPTAIN--!



BLAST!  
NOW HIS  
ACCURSED  
SHOUTING  
HAS  
SCATTERED  
THE OTHER  
HORSES.

WELL, WE'VE  
GOT THIS ONE--  
AND IT WILL  
HAVE TO DO.

COME,  
SON-YA...



WE'VE LEFT  
THOSE DOGS  
BEHIND IN  
THE DUST.  
NOW, WHERE  
TO?

THE PALACE  
ROYAL OF  
COURSE.

WHERE ELSE?

THE PALACE RO--?  
I SWEAR, WOMAN,  
BUT YOU'VE GOT  
NERVE, AT LEAST...



FOR, I SUSPECT  
IT'S MORE THAN  
A PEEK AT THE  
KING YOU'RE  
WANTING THIS  
FINE MOONLESS  
NIGHT.

CONAN, CONAN...THERE  
MAY JUST BE A MIND  
LURKING BEHIND THOSE  
BUSHY BARBARIAN BROWS,  
AFTER ALL.

IN TRUTH,  
YOU'RE  
NOT AS  
BAD AS  
SOME  
I'VE  
MET...!

end of  
part I.

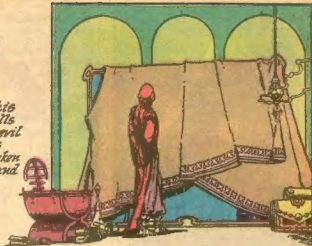


There comes, even to wizards, the time of great fear.

Then the golden throne of power is turned to brass, and the gleaming sceptre of power is crusted over with brass.

And so it is, this night, with the man called Kham-Akkad.

He sits among his treasures—scrolls from ancient, evil Acheron; urns from long-sunken Lemuria—and he is afraid.



For the thousandth time, he rises unsteady to his feet, to stand grimly before a tapestry-shrouded mirror—once the glittering diadems of his possessions, but now—At length, he can stand it no longer!

SURELY IT MUST BE CHANGED BY NOW!

IT MUST!!



The temple walls are thick.

And so, no one hears the hideous, hell-torn shriek which echoes down its long and mirror-lined halls.



There is no one to see the look of stark terror that fastens hawk-like on the wizard's shadowed face... for the thousandth time.



Then, a gaunt hand thrusts out skeletal fingers to drape the great mirror again...



And all is silence once more in the Temple of Tarim.



"I'VE NOT  
BEEN IN  
THIS PART  
OF THE  
PALACE  
GROUNDS  
BEFORE,  
SON-YA.

WHAT  
IS THIS  
GREAT  
TOWER,  
ANYWAY?

YOU'LL  
SEE,  
CONAN.

LET'S JUST SAY  
THERE'S *WALTH*  
ENOUGH INSIDE  
TO LET BOTH OF  
US GIVE UP BEING  
*MERCENARY*  
*SOLDIERS*  
FOREVER.

HERE, TAKE MY  
*ROPE*...UNLESS  
YOU'VE TOO GREAT  
A *LOVE* FOR THE  
CROWNED HEADS  
OF MAKKALET  
TO--

HARDLY. I SEE NOW, THOUGH,  
THAT YOU NEED A  
*CIMMERIAN* TO SCALE  
THOSE SLICK BLACK  
WALLS FOR YOU.



SO--WHAT  
DO I NEED  
YOU FOR?



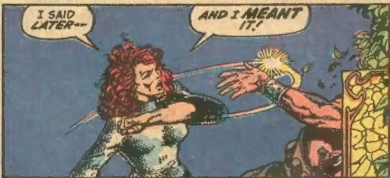
WE'LL DISCUSS *THAT*--  
WHEN WE'RE BOTH  
BACK FROM THE  
TOWER.

AND WHAT IF  
I SAY...WE  
TALK ABOUT  
IT *NOW*?



I SAID  
LATER--

AND I MEANT  
IT!



BY CROM, GIRL--  
I'VE KILLED MEN  
FOR LESS THAN  
THAT!

FOR  
WHAT?  
FOR NOT  
LETTING  
YOU  
KISS  
THEM?

NOW GET  
MOVING--  
UNLESS YOU'D  
RATHER DO  
YOUR CLIMBING  
IN THE  
MORNING  
SUN!









I'M SURE  
YOU COULD  
TEACH ME  
MANY  
THINGS,  
GIRL...



...INCLUDING JUST *WHAT*  
WE'RE RISKING OUR  
NECKS TO *FIND*, HERE  
IN THE NETHER WING  
OF THE PALACE!

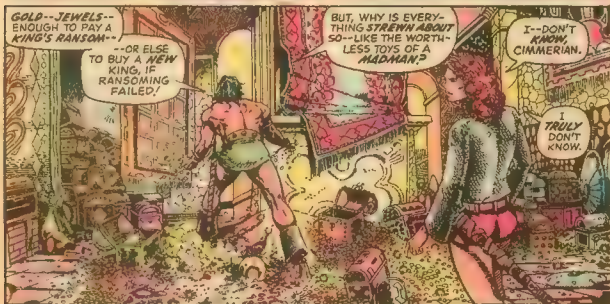
YOU'LL KNOW  
SOON ENOUGH.

NOT  
SOON  
ENOUGH  
FOR ME.



ACCORDING TO  
MY *SOURCES*,  
WHAT WE'RE  
LOOKING FOR  
SHOULD BE--  
IN *THERE*!

*CROW!*



*GOLD--JEWELS--*  
ENOUGH TO PAY A  
*KING'S RANSOM--*

--OR ELSE  
TO BUY A *NEW*  
KING, IF  
RANSOMING  
FAILED!

BUT, WHY IS EVERY-  
THING *STREW*N ABOUT  
SO--LIKE THE WORTH-  
LESS TOYS OF A  
*MADMAN*?

I--DON'T  
*KNOW*,  
CIMMERIAN.

I  
TRULY  
DON'T  
KNOW.



NO, *NO*--DON'T WASTE YOUR  
TIME ON *THOSE* BAUBLES,  
MAN! BETTER THAT YOU CHECK  
THE *CORRIDORS*.

EH?  
WHY  
CAN'T  
YOU--?

BECAUSE  
*YOU* COULD  
HANDLE ANY  
SKULKING  
GUARDS  
BETTER--  
THAN I.



YES--*THAT'S*  
TRUE  
ENOUGH--

--THOUGH  
THAT'S THE  
FIRST TIME  
I EVER  
HEARD YOU  
ADMIT IT!



*BUT*, THE FLAME-HAIRED SHE-DEVIL  
IS NO LONGER LISTENING TO *CONAN'S*  
THROATY GRUMBLINGS.

*RATHER*, SHE IS  
REMEMBERING--

REMEMBERING THE  
MISSION GIVEN HER  
BY PAH-DISHAH'S  
SOVEREIGN, ERE SHE  
CAME TO BESIEGE  
MANKALET.

"YOU WILL **PRETEND**,  
FOR A TIME, THAT WE  
MEAN TO **HONOR** OUR  
TREATY OF AID AND  
ASSISTANCE TO  
MAKKALET IN HER HOUR  
OF GRIEVOUS NEED..."

"BUT AT THE  
EARLIEST POSSIBLE  
MOMENT, YOU WILL  
GAIN ENTRANCE TO  
THE **TOWER** WHERE I  
KNOW MY DAUGHTER'S  
**DOWRY** IS KEPT."

"THERE, YOU WILL  
FIND A CERTAIN  
**SERPENT-TIARA**,  
BESTOWED BY ME IN A  
MOMENT OF FOOLISH  
**MAGNANIMITY...**

"...AND YOU  
WILL **TAKE**  
IT..."

**RED SONJA REMEMBERS WELL**  
THESE WORDS. AND THERE WERE  
OTHERS, TO BOOT...

AND, IN A SECOND  
OR TWO, SHE  
WOULD RECALL  
JUST WHAT THEY  
WERE...

**BUT**, IN THAT INSTANT, SHE  
FINDS THE GLEAMING PRIZE  
SHE SEEKS

AND ITS BEJWELED EYES  
SEEM SO DARKLY BRIGHT...

...THAT SHE FORGETS WHAT  
ELSE KING GHANNIF HAD SAID...

...AS IF...  
ALIVE...  
SOMEHOW...

AND, SEIZING  
THE  
SERPENT-  
TIARA  
WITH  
STRONG  
YOUNG  
HANDS...

SHE NEGLECTS, SOMEHOW,  
TO SUMMON HER ERSTWHILE  
COMPANION WHO STILL  
STALKS THE CORRIDORS, SO  
NEAR AT HAND AND YET  
SO FAR...

UNTIL, SUDDENLY... SHE HAS  
NO CHOICE!

...SHE  
RACES  
FROM  
THE  
CHAMBER.

SON-YA!!

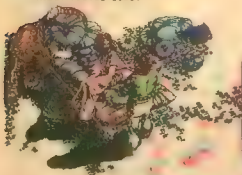
END OF Part I

**T**hat scream of undisguised terror, however, is not heard on the farther side of the palace royal.

*There, a sorely-troubled queen tosses fitfully on soft cushions...scarcely hearing even the footfalls of the one man who has the right to enter her private chambers.*



**S**he starts--looks up as though she had expected to see--  
...someone else.



**T**hen, she turns away...but not before the flickering candle-light has played for a long moment in tear-welled eyes.

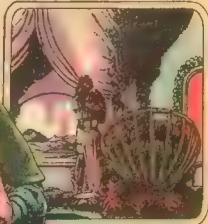
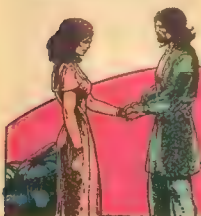
*Gently, he takes her tentatively-offered hand.*



**S**he rises for an eternity, they stand gazing at each other, groping for the words that have always come so hard to a very young queen and a husband twice her age.

**S**o they simply hold each other close...no passion in the embrace, but only a tender caring.

**A**nd, for an instant, there is no Juvanian horde battering at the high serpent-wall of Makkalet...no holy war on which great empires must rise and fall...



**A**t last, they realize that there are no words left to say...

**M**erely a man, grown suddenly older...and a woman, who never was a little girl.



# Part III

IT IS A STRANGE AND EERIE THING--TO STRIDE BRAVELY THRU A VAULTED DOORWAY INTO A VAST, ILL-LIGHTED ROOM WHEREIN A GREAT REPTILIAN FORM IS WRITHING--UNFOLDING--GROWING--

--BEFORE A RED-HAIRED WARRIOR MAIDEN WHO STANDS SHRIEKING IN UNACCUSTOMED HORROR--

BY THE BONES OF CROM!!

KA NAMA  
KAA  
LAJERAMA!

BLAST YOU--  
KA NAMA  
KAA  
LAJERAMA!

--A YE, STANDS SHRIEKING WORDS WHICH ONE HAS NEVER HEARD, YET WHICH SEEM--SOMEHOW--OMINOUSLY FAMILIAR--!

**G**ONAN KNOWS, WITHOUT THINKING, THAT THE GIRL WAS NEAR THE WINDOW WHEN THE SCALY FIEND BEGAN TO GROW--



"--WHAT SHE MEANT, IN TREACHERY, TO DESERT HIM THERE IN THE PALACE--"

**A**ND SO, HE WEIGHS HIS DESIRE FOR HER, AGAINST HIS INSTINCTIVE, HACKLE-RAISING FEAR OF CREATURES UNKNOWN AND MAGIC-BIDDEN...

**F**OR A FLEETING SECOND THE SCALES OF HIS BARBARIAN MIND ARE BALANCED BETWEEN HELPING...AND FLEEING.



**T**HEN, HE SEES RED SONJA RAISE A SHAPELY ARM IN DESPERATE DEFIANCE OF THOSE SLAVERING, TOOTH-SOME JAWS--



BACK TO HELL, DEMON-THING!

--AND THE SCALES ARE BALANCED NO LONGER!



YOU HEARD THE WOMAN, MONSTER!

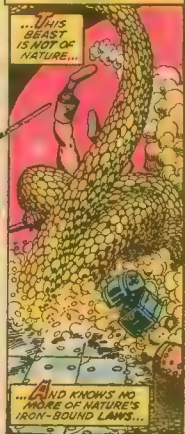
MAYBE THE BLACK PITS OF HELL WILL LOOK BETTER TO YOU--

--WHEN YOU'VE NO MORE FANGS TO BITE WITH!



**B**UT ALTHOUGH, IN NATURE, SERPENTS WITH FANGS ARE RARELY CONSTRUCTORS, AS WELL...

...THIS BEAST IS NOT OF NATURE...



...AND KNOWS NO MORE OF NATURE'S IRON-BOUND LAWS...

...THAN DOES A BLACK-MANED FREEBOOTER, BRED IN THE BLEAK HILLS OF THE NORTH!

MITRA!  
DOESN'T  
THIS  
THING  
KNOW--  
WHEN IT'S  
HELP-  
LESS?

IT WILL  
NEVER BE  
HELPLESS,  
CIMMERIAN--

--UNTIL  
IT'S  
DEAD--

--IF  
DIE IT  
CAN!!

FOR THE SHADOW OF  
A MOMENT, THE  
DEMON-SNAKE LOOMS  
ABOVE THE PAIR--  
HESITANT, UNCERTAIN  
WHICH OF THE TWO  
FOOLS TO KILL FIRST...

AND, DURING  
THAT MOMENT,  
CONAN SEES  
HIS CHANCE...

...YET SCARCELY  
BEFORE THE  
GREAT SERPENT  
SENSES ITS  
PERIL...

BUT, THE BRIEF  
DELAY HAS  
ALLOWED CONAN  
TO REACH A  
JEWEL-FILLED  
CASSET NEARBY...

...AND FOR  
THE CASSET,  
IN TURN...

...DO  
REACH  
THE  
SERPENT!

...AND SWOOPS  
ANEW TO THE  
ATTACK!





CONAN NEVER WONDERS THAT THE GREAT HISsing ROAR OF THE SERPENT DOES NOT BRING GUARDS WITHOUT NUMBER POURING INTO THE TWILIGHT CHAMBER.

LIFE MERELY SNARLS TO LEARN THAT GOLD COINS ARE NOT FOR DIVING INTO!



CONAN! ARE YOU--?

I'M--ALL RIGHT, GIRL--

BUT, BY CROM AND ISHTAR BOTH-- THAT SNAKE ISN'T GOING TO BE!

THIS NIGHT, EITHER IT DIES--OR I DO!  
NOW STAND ASIDE!



NO! I'LL HELP YOU--WHETHER YOU WANT MY HELP OR NOT!

THEN BAT YOUR SEA-GREEN EYES AT THAT THING--OR MAYBE WIGGLE YOUR HIPS!

THAT WORKED WITH ME, AT ANY RATE!



I'LL FORGET THAT REMARK, CIMMERIAN, TILL WE'RE IN THE CLEAR AGAIN.

NOW, IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING, THEN DO IT--



--BECAUSE, THIS TIME, THE THING HAS DECIDED TO GO FOR ME!



CONAN--!?



I'M HERE, SON-YA!

AND THIS SPAWN OF HELL WILL WISH THAT I WERE NOT!!

**EVEN A DEVIL-BEAST CAN DIE!**  
THAT WHICH HAS BECOME FLESH--  
EVEN SCALED FLESH--HAS BECOME  
BLOOD, AS WELL.

**UNTIL THIS MOMENT,**  
CONAN HAS DARED HOPE  
THE GREAT SERPENT WAS  
A MERE FIGMENT OF HIS  
IMAGINATION--A CREATION,  
PERHAPS, OF KHARAM-AKKAD'S  
FIENDISH MIRRORS--

**...IN A MOST  
CONVINCING  
MANNER!**

**CROM!!**

**BUT, THIS HAS  
BEEN THE FINAL  
DEATH-LUNGE  
EVEN FOR A  
DRAGON BIRTHED  
IN MAGIC...**

**AND SO,  
BOTH  
NOW TO  
THE DUST-  
CAKED,  
BLOOD-  
DRENCHED  
FLOOR  
BELOW...**

**ONLY ONE OF THEM TO RISE  
AGAIN...**

MY APOLOGIES,  
CIMMERIAN. YOU  
WEREN'T RUNNING  
OUT ON ME, AFTER  
ALL, AS I--

**TARIM'S  
BLOOD!  
THE  
SERPENT-  
THING IS--  
CHANGING!**

DIDN'T--  
YOU  
KNOW--  
IT  
WOULD--  
GIRL?

AND HOW  
MUCH--  
MORE  
DID YOU  
KNOW--  
THAT YOU  
NEVER  
TOLD ME?

**BUT NOW,  
AS HE  
SPIRALS  
SWIFTLY  
UPWARD  
ATOP THE  
LONGNECK'S  
HORNED  
BROW, HE  
LEARNS  
THAT IT  
IS A  
LIVING  
THING--**



PRECIOUS  
LITTLE,  
BLACK-  
MAINE...  
THOUGH  
I DOUBT  
YOU'LL  
BELIEVE  
ME.

EXCEPT THAT PAH-  
DISHAH'S WIZARD  
GAVE ME A  
PHRASE TO SPEAK,  
TO KEEP THE  
SERPENT-BAND  
FROM SPRINGING  
TO LIFE.

BUT, IN THE  
HEAT OF  
EXCITEMENT,  
I FORGOT TILL  
TOO LATE TO SAY...



"...KA NAMA KAA  
LAJERAMA!"



IT  
BECOMES  
--A  
TIARA?!

AND THAT  
PHRASE  
YOU SPOKE--  
IT IS NEW  
TO MY  
EARS, AND  
YET--

MEN SAY KING RULL OF  
VALUSIA VOICED IT,  
BEFORE ATLANTIS SANK  
--THAT IT GAVE HIM  
POWER AGAINST THE  
SERPENT RACE--

--ONE OF  
WHOSE  
MINIONS  
LIES  
IMPRISONED  
WITHIN  
THIS TIARA  
--FOREVER.



I WANT  
ONLY THIS.  
BUT, IF YOU  
WANT TO GO  
BACK FOR  
THE  
JEWELS...

NO, I'VE GOT TO  
GO ON LIVING  
IN THIS CITY,  
AFTER ALL.

BESIDES,  
I FOUGHT  
THIS NIGHT  
FOR OTHER  
REWARDS.



SO  
SLOW  
DOWN,  
WOMAN...

...WE'VE  
GOT  
ALL  
NIGHT  
BEFORE  
US!



PERHAPS  
YOU DO,  
MAN...



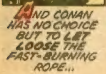
BUT  
I--



--DO  
NOT!!



THE SILKEN  
STRAND BURNS  
LIKE DRY STRAW  
AT THE TOUCH  
OF THE MAGIC-  
BORN FLAME...



AND CONAN  
HAS NO CHOICE  
BUT TO LET  
LOOSE THE  
FAST-BURNING  
ROPE...



...AND TAKE  
YET A THIRD  
STEEP FALL  
THIS MEMORABLE  
EVENING!



MY  
LEG--  
FEELS  
LIKE  
IT'S  
THE  
THING  
ON  
FIRE--!

BUT  
THAT  
WON'T  
STOP  
ME  
NOW!



BY ISHTAR, GIRL,  
YOU'LL PAY WITH  
KISSES A-PLenty  
FOR--

NO MAN'S LIPS  
SHALL EVER  
TOUCH MINE,  
CIMMERIAN--



